

my heart is a church bell ringing by dgalera

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Summary:

Two times Richie makes a wedding happen and one time he gets his own wedding.

my heart is a church bell ringing

Author's Note:

it took me literally several months to realize that ben's poem was a haiku and so the only warning this fic really needs is that in it *i* attempt to write a haiku and that fact shows

Bev and Ben are the first of the Losers to get married, about three years after they get engaged. Mike gets ordained, because of course he does, and it's a small ceremony. Just them, North of Derry, on the coast overlooking a lighthouse that Ben liked.

She's dressed in a frosty blue dress that flutters in the wind and makes her look like a faerie princess of some kind when she takes off running through the field after jumping out of the window barefoot, and Richie's suit matches the color as he races after her and tackles her into the long grass.

"What are you *doing*?" he shouts, and she doesn't fight him much, which is good because he knows she could absolutely break his nose in her sleep.

"I don't know!" she screams back.

"Then stop!"

"What if I fuck this up?!"

"How are you going to fuck your marriage up more than not getting married?"

She flops onto the ground, not nearly as graceful as her dress or her nicely curled hair would suggest. "Christ, Richie, what the fuck?"

He rolls over so they're both sprawled out in the grass. "What the fuck do you mean what the fuck?"

"I'm getting married," Bev says. "To someone wonderful."

“Yeah, exactly,” Richie says.

“How the *fuck*,” Bev whispers.

“Because you’re wonderful too, Ringwald,” Richie says. “And you earned this. Fought tooth and fuckin’ nail for this. To be happy.”

She lets out a long breath. “Do you have some cigarettes?” she asks.

“What kind of maid of honor would I be if I didn’t?” he replies, grinning and pulling a pack of cigarettes and a lighter out of his pockets.

She smiles and takes a cigarette, letting him light it for her.

He takes her in, the flowers she’d put in her hair mingled with the grass she’d picked up when they’d landed, her breezy blue dress and the smoke billowing around her like the grass itself, and says, “Shit, Bev, this is a really good picture. Don’t move.”

He races off to get the camera and returns a minute later with her camera, and she grins at him.

“No, no, make a face like you’re staring off into the distance,” Richie says. “Like you’re some kinda immortal being or some shit.”

She laughs, and he snaps a picture of it as it happens. He can only hope its good.

He takes another few serious ones of her taking long, thoughtful drags of her cigarette, and then she reaches out for the camera. “C’mon, I want to take a few of you,” she says.

He snorts. “Why?” He’s not quite as lanky as he was at eighteen but he’s still all long legs and sharp elbows and he’s been trying to grow out his hair but instead it’s just all over the place, falling into his eyes and curling like it’s trying to escape, and his glasses still suck.

“You’re my best man,” Bev says. “And best friend. And someday when you marry Eddie, it’s gonna be fun to have your wedding pictures next to the pictures of you saving your dumb friend’s wedding.”

Richie blows a silly *pffftbt* at her to avoid getting choked up. *When* you marry Eddie, she says. It seems impossible, but Eddie seems to think that eventually they'll be able to get married. In fact, they all do.

She combs his hair out of his face and rearranges his jacket and sits him down in the grass. He's pretty sure his hair is already escaping her attempts to tame it, but she's the photographer, not him.

He grins at her, and she snaps a picture. "Now smile all soft," she says, "like you do when Eddie says nice things about you to your face."

He laughs, and thinks about Eddie the last time they were laying in bed together and Eddie had swept his hair out of his face and said, "You are such a sweet baby," in that *voice*.

The camera clicks twice, and Richie looks up at her. "Did you get what you wanted?" he asks.

"Yeah," she says, and helps him up. "Trust me, it's gonna be poetry."

"Okay," he says. "But speaking of poetry, you've got a hunky dumpling to marry."

"A hunky dumpling?"

"Yeah, like, hot but also just really soft and sweet. Like, the desert dumplings. It's a metaphor!" He wrinkles his nose. "Is it a metaphor? Definitely a metaphor. Poetry."

"Okay, Shakespeare, don't quit your day job."

Richie laughs and walks her back to the lighthouse. "I'm really, really fucking happy for you, Bev," he says. "And I promise you won't fuck this up. I really mean it."

She smiles at him. "I trust you," she says. "And you're gonna get this too."

He smiles at her, bittersweet, and tries to believe it.

Mike gives a beautiful speech about love and patience and friendship, and Richie cries like a baby, but not as much as Ben.

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He's Stan's best man too.

He spends most of his night drawing Stan's dad's attention away from Stan, mostly by being so profoundly annoying and dumb that poor Mr. Uris can't look away. This is all well and fine - Mr. Uris is, in fact, very easy to annoy - until Mrs. Uris (currently the only one, soon to be usurped by a much prettier and cooler Mrs. Uris, Richie thinks) joins them from where she's been putting Patty through the in-law obstacle course.

"Richard," Mrs. Uris says, because she's got some kind of allergy to nicknames, Richie thinks. She even calls Bill *William*. "You look... well."

She smiles and seems to mean it, but her eyes graze over Richie's hair - a few inches past his shoulders now, and he's struck by the urge to curl his fingers up into his palms to hide his painted nails because it's too much and too blatant and too *gay* and it's been years of living with Eddie and going to drag shows with Patty and making gay jokes to his friends and even his coworkers and yet he takes one look at Stan's parents and it feels like the black hand of Derry is reaching out to wring every drop of this meek, hard earned self-acceptance out of him.

"I spoke to your parents," she says.

Richie's not going to have a panic attack at Stanley's wedding, he's not, he's not, he's *not*, even if Eddie and Bill and Mike have all noticed him from across the room and are slowly deciding whether or not to run interference and get him out of this conversation before he absolutely has a total panic attack at Stanley's wedding.

"How are they?" he asks. He gets a card for Christmas and for his birthday every year, with some cash and a few nice words and he sends the same back, but somehow none of them say, *Hey son I know you moved to New York with your boyfriend after having slurs carved into*

the entire town with your name and have been too scared to come back, wanna call us sometime and chat about it?

Richie has kind of figured that means they don't hate him, but they also don't know what to do with him, and that's been the way of things since he was born a boy. Or maybe since he turned out to be a loud boy. Richie's never been sure where they lost him, only that they didn't exactly mean to and that their intentions don't matter much in the way of feeling less abandoned.

"They miss you," she says.

"I, uh," Richie says, and he nearly makes a joke about inviting them to his wedding, but he still feels like there's a little bit of Derry sewage leaking into his heart and drowning out the hope that he'll ever *have* a wedding. "I know. But I can't go back there."

Mr. Uris gets a pinched look, but Mrs. Uris simply nods. "They seemed to think so too. We all know Derry has... a history. But they said to ask how you're doing."

"Great," Richie says. "I'm great. I'm happy."

She nods. "You look happy."

Richie thinks he looks like he's about to pass out, because Bill and Eddie cut in at that point, and both of Stan's parents nearly have kittens to fawn over Eddie's lethal dead-mother-and-medical-degree combo. Richie leaves him to charm their pants off, because if there's one thing Eddie's good at it's sucking up to parents, and goes to find Stan.

He does not expect to find Stan with one leg out the bathroom window. Clearly, Stan was not expecting to be found either, because he looks very sheepish.

Richie tries not to laugh. "What the fuck, man?" He's not doing a great job of it.

"My dad took one look at Patty and said 'she certainly is too pretty to work at a zoo,'" Stan explains. "And I don't know why it got to me but he is so fucking *judgy* and I'm just, like, going to call Patty from a

few miles down and ask her to elope, or maybe, just, like, flee the country and change my name to something very not Jewish and join a less judgemental religion? Like... I don't know, I hear Quakers are pretty nice."

"Staniel," Richie says, grabbing him and dragging him out of the window. "Every word of that was nonsense, you know that, right?"

"I mean, I did call my dad fucking judgy," Stan says.

"Okay, I'll give you that one," Richie says. "But that's not because he's Jewish, he's just a bastard."

Stan huffs a laugh. "That's not the point, and it's very disconcerting to be lectured on casual antisemitism from you of all people."

"Look," Richie says, sitting down on the toilet. "Don't tell Eddie I sat on a toilet to have this talk, but c'mon, man. You've got a fucking beautiful, kickass lady in the other room who just listened to your mother talk about fucking crockpots for five entire minutes. I know because Patty made faces at me through the crack in the door I was eavesdropping through every time the clock hit a new minute, because she's also very fucking funny. And works at the zoo, which is a cool profession no matter what your dad thinks. And you *want* to go up there in front of your family and friends and tell them all that you love her and want to be with her forever."

"That's true," Stan says. "But also I'm realizing that the last time I spoke in front of these people, I got the microphone physically wrestled out of my hands."

"And it was super cool and I can't believe my mom wouldn't let me applaud you," Richie says. "I mean, maybe don't do that this time, because Patty would be entertained I'm sure but she kind of deserves a proper wedding after finding out her straight-laced accountant boyfriend, like, killed monsters as a child, but..."

"Alright, alright," Stan sighs. "God."

"You want a smoke?" Richie asks. "That's what Bev needed before she could get married to the love of her life, so I assume..."

"I do not need a cigarette," Stan snaps. He pauses, then sighs and holds out his arms. "I kind of need a hug, though."

Richie nearly breaks his elbow in his eagerness to comply.

Stan squeezes him tightly. "I'm really, really glad you're my best man."

"Aw, hell," Richie says, sniffing. Goddamn, he's going to cry straight through the ceremony, he can tell right now.

"I'm going to be your best man," Stan informs him. "Even if I have to best Bev in armed combat for it."

"Okay, first of all, I think I'm should allowed a best man *and* a maid of honor, on account of having to deal with homophobia," Richie says.

"That's fair," Stan says.

"Second of all, could you gently whisper promises that I *will* one day get married because I feel like I sort of stared down the barrel of the Derry gun while herding your parents and I'm just kinda..."

"You're absolutely going to get married," Stan promises. "It's already legal in Massachusetts."

"Wait, for real?" Richie asks. "Since when?"

"Yes, Richie, since earlier this year. I can't believe you are this bad at keeping up with the news."

Bev interrupts by clearing her throat. "So I'm sure you have very important reasons to be discussing the news while hugging in a bathroom but you're sort of supposed to be getting married."

"Right," Stan says, pulling away from Richie, who feels a little like he's been put on a rollercoaster and then into a blender. But emotionally. "Sorry, Richie was just single handedly saving this wedding."

"He does that," Bev says, grinning. "Okay, alright, I'm holding up

your wedding, but I need to take a picture of Richie.” She grabs her camera. “Because someday we’re going to use his status as wedding savior to embarrass him at his own wedding.”

“It’s legal in Massachusetts,” Richie says dizzily, letting Stan try to tame his hair and straighten his tie, propping him up so his back is straight and he’s actually looking into the camera.

“Smile,” Bev says, and snaps a picture.

Richie gives the worst best man speech of all time because he’s still reeling from the bone deep shock of *fucking Massachusetts* and crying over Stan’s vows and the fact that Patty gave him a tissue before staring her own and he nearly blurts out that Patty owns a strap-on before she shuts him up by shoving her bouquet into his mouth and helping Stan lead him off the stage.

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In retrospect, Richie still doesn’t know how they did it.

He’s supposed to be filming a TV special and it gets delayed a couple weeks. Due to problems with the venue, he’s told. Richie has no idea how he’d even go about rescheduling something like that, but somehow Stan had managed.

Bill very casually asks if Richie would like to use the opportunity to come with him to the woods because he’s writing some weird-ass book about a cabin in the woods that’s going to revolutionize the horror genre, as usual, and he needs the space to think and he doesn’t want to go alone. *Bev has already agreed to come, Richie, it’d be so much fun, right?*

Eddie tells him he has a packed schedule that week, so he might as well. Richie mopes at him, but Eddie promises he’ll have time the week after.

(He doesn’t say that he’s arranged to take time off, nor does he say why, because it turns out he’s a conniving little bastard.)

So Bill and Bev drag Richie out into the woods in upstate New York where there’s barely any signal. (Just enough signal for him to call

Eddie every so often and for Bev to occasionally steal his phone and delete any texts that might clue him in on what's happening here.)

It's a very peaceful vacation, Richie thinks, except for how the longer they're there, the weirder Bill and Bev act.

("So like, are you guys gonna ax murder me while we're up here?" Richie asks.

"Oh, definitely," Bev says.

"Cool," Richie says, and puts his feet in her lap.)

They drive back early in the morning, probably so Richie is sure to fall asleep in the car. (He wouldn't put it past them to drug him for this, to be honest.) He wakes up to Stan knocking on the car door and then he's handed a suit. "Change," Stan tells him.

"Huh?" Richie asks. "Is this, like, a cult thing?"

"Just change," Stan says.

"That's not comforting at all," Richie says, and gets as far as putting on the dress pants before he realizes he's been given a suit. "Um?"

"Do it," Stan says, face betraying nothing.

"Okay, a *fancy* cult," Richie says, and tries to figure out where the fuck they are. It's New York, but he doesn't know this part of town very well and he knows it's a ways away from their apartment. Stan reaches forward to tie his tie for him, because it always takes Richie a few tries.

He only wears this suit for formal events. Stan says it makes him look like a deranged Easter Willy Wonka, but Richie likes the pastel colors and the way there's a lot of them and they only barely go together. "Hey, Stan, uh, am I going to die on this day?" Richie asks.

"Maybe," Stan says.

"Cool," Richie says. "Tell Eddie I love him."

“He’ll know,” Stan says.

“Hm,” Richie says. “That’s somehow even more ominous.”

At this point, in retrospect, he probably should have realized.

Bev snaps a picture of him as Stan drags him out of the car and marches him down the street, and she’d changed sometime too, into a dress that matches half of his weird pastel colors, and then Richie blinks a few times and Stan is wearing the other half, and somehow *that’s* what does it.

“Oh, fuck,” he says. “Wait.”

“Yeah,” Stan says.

“Wait.”

“No running,” Bev warns. “No matter how nervous you get. It’s payback time, Tozier.”

“Kaspbrak,” Stan corrects gracefully.

“I’m gonna pass out,” Richie mumbles, at roughly the same time as his legs actually give out under him because everything is spinning and his heart is in his throat and all he can think is *Richie Kaspbrak* because god fucking damn he’d been too scared to write that name a hundred times in his middle school textbooks but hell if his heart didn’t ache to try it.

Bev takes one arm and Stan takes the other and they somehow keep him upright and walk him into the courthouse - *the courthouse, a house where people can get married and can he get married?* - and Eddie looks at him and smiles and then he’s *down on one knee* and Richie manages not to puke from sheer overwhelmed mania but it’s close.

“Hey,” Eddie says, offering him a ring. “I know you wanna marry me but I thought I should propose anyway.”

“I feel like you’re Han Solo-ing me,” Richie says, feeling dazed. His mouth seems a million miles away. “Does this count as... um... holy fucking fuck.”

“Are you ready to get married?” Eddie asks softly. “Because if so you’re gonna be married, like, now.”

Richie lets out a confused noise between a sob and a whine and a cat getting murdered, probably, and manages to nod and Eddie slips the ring on his finger while Bev and Stan hold Richie up. Eddie kisses him, and Richie almost wishes he hadn’t because he’s absolutely going to *pass the fuck out* at his own wedding, *his wedding!*

Bev and Stan all but have to carry him into the courtroom where Patty is standing with a lady in a business suit is watching him like she’s debating whether he’s okay or not. Richie assumes he looks like someone who’s gotten kidnapped and is being wrestled into a marriage so he manages to choke out, “I’m not being held hostage I’m just very emotional,” between heaving sobs.

"Don't worry, I warned her," Patty whispers.

That lady cracks a smile. “Trust me, I’ve held some of my weirdest ceremonies in the past few days,” she says.

“We gave it some time for the lines to die down,” Bill offers. “Because we wanted to surprise you.”

Richie wants to tease Eddie with the fact that they could have been married days ago, but he instead sobs something like, “Can I si-sit duh-down pl-pluh-please?” while his whole body heaves with sobs.

“Sure,” the poor lady says, and Richie slides down and clings to Eddie’s leg.

And maybe he shouts, “I do!” like the question is going to be torn away if he doesn’t catch it fast enough and maybe he signs *Richie Kaspbrak* like a 5 year old because he can’t see past the tears and maybe Stan and Bev argue for a several seconds about who gets to be the first witness until Richie begs them to please, *please* just let him be *married*, and when Eddie gets handed the marriage license and he has to sit down next to Richie to cry as well and Richie, not to be topped in the field of drama, has to lay down, and eventually Mike has to carry Richie out of the room like a baby and Ben and Stan have to haul Eddie back to his feet.

But eventually they end up in some moderately fancy Chinese restaurant and Richie's flopped against Eddie, still crying like toddlers do, loud and snotty and unrestrained, and Eddie pulls him up and kisses him softly and asks, "So, how's it feel to be Richie Kaspbrak?"

Richie can't manage a full sentence so he just nods and presses his forehead to Eddie's chest and hopes he understands.

"Hey," Eddie says, rubbing Richie's back, "I know we've talked about a shotgun wedding a lot, but if you want a normal wedding, we can always go back for round two. Invite your parents and all."

Richie shakes his head. "This was perfect," he chokes out. "Everything's perfect."

"Okay," Eddie says, stroking his hair. He's still sniffing too. "Okay, good. I thought so too. Especially where you sobbed through it all like an actual baby."

"Fuck off," Richie says, all high pitched and wobbly.

"Hey," Eddie says, taking Richie's face in his hands and making Richie look him in the eyes. Richie tries to wipe away the tears so he can actually see Eddie, but he's been crying for two hours straight. "I said that as a joke, but I *mean* it. I love, *love* how you have so much heart it exploded out of your chest at finally being married and I love that you were so ready to be married you literally didn't give a shit that we kidnapped you and didn't even tell you it was your wedding day and I'm so, so happy I finally get to tell the U.S. government that I'm going to spend the rest of my life with you."

"More importantly, the IRS," Stan says.

"Thank you, Stanley," Eddie says, but Richie's laughing through his tears and Eddie looks absolutely thrilled about it.

"Several thousand dollars a year," Stan says. Patty softly pats his arm as though to remind him to dial it back because his sobbing friends are in no shape to be teased about taxes.

"A real romantic, Stanley," Richie manages, sniffing into Eddie's

shoulder. Eddie doesn't seem to mind the snot all over his shirt, which is almost more powerful than the marriage license.

"Oh, don't mind him," Bev says. "He helped me very much with this."

She hands them a large scrapbook.

Eddie takes it gingerly and cracks it open. The first page reads, in Ben's neat writing,

eternal savior of weddings
is wed himself
to the bravest of us

"Oh fuck that's so stupid," Richie chokes out, covering his face.

Ben grins, very pleased with himself.

"Fuck, we just stopped crying," Eddie manages. "What the fuck, fuck you guys."

Bev laughs. "Look at the pictures."

"I see the pictures," Eddie says, voice wobbling. "Why do you think I'm crying?"

Richie peeks at them, careful not to get teardrops onto the fine scrapbook paper. Bev has made him look downright pretty in both, curls falling around his face and lips red as he smiles softly, looking almost dignified, and Richie hadn't noticed how softly Stan was looking at him in the second one, grateful and adoring.

Eddie gently flips the page, and the many pictures here aren't quite as flattering to him - he looks like a manic goof in each of them, though Bev has done magic with the lighting around him to make even *that* look mildly ethereal. But each picture has Eddie in the background, smiling and watching him like he hung the moon.

Eddie is by no means shy about telling Richie he's happy with him, but *this*...

Richie slides under the table and clings to his leg. "We're *married*."

“Get off the floor, dude, do you know how gross restaurant floors get?” Eddie gripes halfheartedly, fingers combing through Richie’s hair while Richie sobs against his knee.

“No, I live here at your feet now, husband,” Richie says.

“Alright, I guess,” Eddie says, sniffing heartily as well. “Husband.”

“Oh, yeah, Richie, just so you know,” Mike says, “you’re headed to Hawaii for your honeymoon.”

“There’s a honeymoon too?!” Richie blurts. “Jesus H Fucking Christ!”

Eddie bursts into laughter.

And, well, at least Richie will die happy.

Author's Note:

richie uses richie trashmouth as his stage name because he's a dork but he changes all his social media to richie kaspbrak the moment he can and that's final